



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

February 16, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-61 –
Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Resurfacing Parking
Lots: MCG

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-61 – *Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG* – has the potential to align with the County’s overall objective of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) P509914 could serve to advance equitable outcomes for those at greatest risk of experiencing food insecurity. This assessment is based on the intended use of the resurfaced lot—to accommodate a cold storage unit for perishable food products distributed by the East County Service Consolidation Hub to those in need.

Of note, ORESJ acknowledges that while the East County Service Consolidation Hub – like all of the Montgomery County (MoCo) Service Consolidation Hubs¹ – serves those in need of food and resource supports, their efforts will not address the underlying structures creating food insecurity in the County. Instead, they will provide resources to those who are disproportionately impacted by financial strains exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic—primarily low-income County residents.

¹ Montgomery County, MD, MC311 Customer Service Center. *Montgomery County Service Consolidation HUBS*. 2023. Available at: <https://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-6YEJKI>

- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-61 – *Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG* – is to provide for the design and major rehabilitation of existing asphalt parking lots and associated drainage structures—to include milling and re-paving, full depth reconstruction of failed areas, and re-establishing positive drainage.² Specifically, funding from this supplemental appropriation will ultimately serve to resurface the former Hillandale Elementary School parking lot in Silver Spring that will accommodate a cold storage unit to be made available for use by the East County Service Consolidation Hub. The resurfaced parking lot will provide storage space for spoilable products – such as produce and dairy – that the East County Service Consolidation Hub distributes to children, families, and seniors in need.

Internal research conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – which utilizes the work of the Capital Area Food Bank’s *2022 Hunger Report*³ – has found that the burden of food insecurity has most acutely affected low-income communities, particularly those with higher concentrations of immigrants as they are most often excluded from governmental supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and housing assistance due to their undocumented status. Specifically, DHHS identified Hispanic/Latino populations as those with the greatest level of need for food support, in addition to significant populations of Black individuals in the Down and East County areas. The East County Service Consolidation Hub – operated by the Kingdom Fellowship AME Church⁴ and the Rainbow Community Development Center⁵ – service the East County communities of White Oak, Briggs Chaney, Cloverly, Burtonsville, Colesville, Hillandale, and Fairland⁶—all of which represent a portion of District 5⁷ whose population is almost a third Black.

- III. **ANALYSIS OF CIP PROJECTS THROUGH THE LENS OF RACE EQUITY:** ORESJ has previously documented the increased need for food support for Montgomery County residents, primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted low-income communities of color. Our analysis can be found in the following Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs):

1. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #23-27 Food Staples Program

² Montgomery County, MD Capital Budget. *Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG*. 2023. Available at: <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P509914>

³ Capital Area Food Bank. *2022 Hunger Report*. 2022. Available at: <https://hungerreport.capitalareafoodbank.org/report-2022/>

⁴ Kingdom Fellowship AME Church. 2023. Available at: <https://kingdom.global/>

⁵ Rainbow Community Development Center. 2022. Available at: <https://www.rainbowcdc.org/>

⁶ Montgomery County Government COVID-19 Information Portal. *Food Resources / Recursos Alimenticios*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/food.html#hubs>

⁷ Montgomery Planning Research & Strategic Projects Division. *Montgomery County Demographic Trends Presentation to the Montgomery County Council*. 2023. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/2023/County_Council_Demographic_Presentation_1-23-23.pdf

- <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-27.pdf>
2. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #23-25 Supply Chain Assistance (SAC) Fund
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-25.pdf>
3. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation Food Security Bridge Funding Proposal
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/FoodSecurity.pdf>
4. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-27 Food Security Bridge Funding Proposal
updated
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-27.pdf>
5. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-79 Bridge Funding for the Food Security Task
Force
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-79.pdf>

Additionally, ORESJ developed a Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool (CIP BET) and Guidance Manual⁸ to help stakeholders in Montgomery County incorporate a racial equity lens into CIP project development and resource decisions. Best practices for using a racial equity tool, such as the CIP BET, suggest that the tool should be used early and often in project development and involve a diverse set of project stakeholders—including community members and intended beneficiaries of the program.

Initial project appropriation for *Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG* took place prior to the passage of the RESJ Act which requires projects to assess their need or impact through the lens of racial equity. As a result, this supplemental appropriation request does not propose any substantive changes that would advance racially equitable outcomes as this was not a requirement or consideration of the department. Specifically, during the FY23-28 CIP budget submission cycle, the Montgomery County Government Department of General Services (DGS) stated in their CIP BET response for CIP P509914 “*No, this project does not align with the county’s policy to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and inequities*”. DGS went on to justify their response by stating, “*This is a CIP [Level of Effort] LOE project and it has not reviewed racial inequities*”. While there may be limited opportunities to identify project changes that may support the reduction of racial disparities and inequities within the project – as these were not considered during the design – using ORESJ’s CIP BET as a framework, we offer several observations for consideration:

What racial disparities or inequities in Montgomery County does this project seek to reduce or eliminate?

As previously stated in the program’s response to the FY23 CIP BET, this project does not seek to address a specific racial disparity or inequity in the County as the funding request serves to finance an existing project implemented prior to the passage of the RESJ Act. For the purposes of resurfacing the parking lot of the former Hillandale Elementary School,

⁸ The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. *Guidance Manual: FY24 Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool*. 2022. Available at:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/CIP_EquityTool_101322_PS2.pdf

CIP P509914 will benefit recipients of the East County Service Consolidation Hub’s food distribution services who, based on the location of the site, are most likely low-income communities identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). While these efforts do not seek to address systemic and root causes of food insecurity among these groups, they do act as a starting point in ensuring that the communities served have their basic needs met by aiming to curb hunger. Additionally, the site distributes other vital items that families need such as diapers and feminine hygiene products—necessities people continue to struggle to afford in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and historic cost increases propelled by inflation.

How does this project address the racial disparities and inequities you described?

Addressing racial disparities and inequities is not identified as a core tenet of the funding request, however acknowledgement of the potential benefit to BIPOC communities was made due to the intended use of the resurfaced parking lot and who it will ultimately serve. The efforts of the East County Consolidation Hub will be even more imperative as a return to pre-pandemic benefit levels for SNAP along with the ending of pandemic-era rental assistance payments come to an end. These interventions, along with the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC), demonstrated proven outcomes lending themselves to stability for families often struggling to make ends meet and were of particular benefit to those identified as BIPOC. The end of these benefits will likely cause an uptick in need for supplemental supports such as those provided by the East County Consolidation Hub.

Does this project (including its development, construction, or implementation) have the potential to create any unintended consequences?

DGS responses did not identify the potential for any undue burden placed upon BIPOC County residents as a result of funding this supplemental request. In fact, delaying this funding request could serve to exacerbate inequities as it could impact the East County Consolidation Hub’s ability to store perishable food items distributed at their *Grab and Go* events. Funding CIP P509914 will not address root causes and systemic factors that result in food insecurity in BIPOC communities, but instead provide a stopgap solution to addressing some of the County’s food needs. To address issues of food insecurity would require the County to examine long-term processes that lend themselves to stable outcomes for those who have historically been left behind. This would include consolidating and streamlining resources towards a universal goal where innovative and culturally responsive strategies are deployed to address the unique needs of diverse county residents experiencing food insecurity.

cc: David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive